

Chairman Towns wrote a blog post at [BlogHer](#) about his introduction of H.R. 4869, the "Restroom Gender Parity in Federal Buildings Act":

At [Blog Her](#) , Chairman Towns said:

I have long been committed to gender equality in our society and this legislation is a small but significant step in the right direction. It specifically calls for an equal urinal to toilet ratio, meaning that if a men's bathroom has four toilets and four urinals, the corresponding women's bathroom will have eight toilets. Furthermore, the bill will not apply to existing federal buildings unless the building is undergoing major renovations, and when leasing or purchasing an existing building the government will give preference to buildings that already meet the bill's specifications.

Women continue to suffer as a result of decades' old sexual discrimination in the design of federal buildings, often forcing women to leave their offices for extended periods of time and potentially jeopardizing their jobs and their health. Restroom disparity also calls to mind the inequalities that have been a significant part of this country's history. But Congress has taken remarkable steps to eradicate discriminatory practices for women working in the federal government, and I believe we can continue in that great tradition by acting on this bill.

When I mention this bill to friends, their response is often filled with disbelief. They cannot imagine that it will take a new federal law to give women equal access to bathroom facilities. I agree. In the year 2010, and with the incredible advances of our country, it seems unthinkable that women do not have equal access to bathroom facilities.

The [Washington Post highlighted the bill's introduction](#) :

Democrats and Republicans on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee joined together on Thursday to introduce the "Potty Parity Act," a bill that would require future federal buildings to have a 1 to 1 ratio for toilets in men's and women's restrooms. The mandate would also apply to buildings leased by the government.

A lack of restrooms in government buildings constructed decades before women joined the federal workforce en masse has been known to cause long lines for female staffers, explained the bill's lead sponsor, Rep. Edolphus Towns (D-N.Y.). Some women have suffered work-related problems and been fired as a result of their inability to take the time necessary to address health or medical concerns, he said...

Lest you think this is just lawmakers going out of their way to keep the federal workforce happy, potty parity has been a big issue nationwide, especially in the construction of new sports arenas, where a lack of facilities for women has been known to take them away from the game for extended periods of time. Advocates have been known to threaten cities with sexual discrimination lawsuits if they didn't ensure equal restroom access.